634 among the other ministers. The rich and important cantons
645 were entrusted to the Kamsaogo Naba, chief eunuch. This was
[839] because the emperor wanted to be sure that he would recover the fortune left by this minister at his death. Since the latter was merely the guardian of the king's wives, he had no legitimate heirs. The eunuch appointed to replace him had to establish his own personal fortunes. Only the horses or women which the late minister might have given [49] during his lifetime to persons in his section were left with their owners. [Ed., Mossi villages are
[621] divided into sections (Fr., quartier), which are really hamlets containing several households or compounds. These sections are indigenous, not colonial subdivisions.]

Powers of the Ministers over the Vassal Chiefs of the Mogho Naba

634 It would be a mistake to think that before the French occu-
645 pation the ministers had any great authority over the canton chief.
642 Actually, the ministers' role, as has been pointed out, was to act as intermediaries between the emperor and the canton chiefs. They could not, however, under any right or pretext, intervene in canton affairs, since the kombéré was the only lord in the area whose command had been conferred upon him as an appanage by the Mogho Naba.

That is why it has been possible for canton chiefs who were dissatisfied with the minister under whose rule they found themselves to report, henceforth, to another minister. Furthermore, the Mogho Naba saw no objection to this. The Mossi expression,
[638] Gansobend'ka sambiri n'tont vigri yé ("hospitality is not like kinship; you can evade it") amply illustrates the accuracy of the
[651] foregoing. If it is further noted that before the French occupation the naba came to Ouagadougou only once a year to pay their respects to the emperor and to bring him annual tribute, one will readily understand the insignificance of the ministers' authority over them.

This does not mean, of course, that it was possible to [50] do without any intermediaries, but rather that it was possible to choose them freely. In any case, one of the incentives to

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to the Mogho Naba: "Since I have come to you, give the first rank to this man. I will show him what he must do to please you. He will be the Ouidi Naba."

A man from Tansobongo, having heard that the Ouidi Naba was living in the greatest ease, came to see him. He, too, was a handsome youth. He was presented to the Mogho Naba (Naba Oubri) by the Gounga Naba who proposed the young man's appointment as second minister, the Larrhallé Naba, and reserved for himself the post of third minister.

So it came about that the Gounga Naba is the emperor's third minister.

645 place where there were once many goumsé (gounga, silk-cotton tree); hence, his name.

[826] He is a brother-in-arms of the Tansoba and always accompanied him to war, where he chose death rather than defeat, especially if the Tansoba had been killed.

644 (d) Baloum Naba, the chief steward of the palace and chief servitor of the Mogho Naba. He never goes to war, but remains always at the side of the Mogho Naba. It is his duty to carry out

[782] [65] *sacrifices, such as killing the chickens or livestock offered* to the manes or to the spirits when such sacrifices are prescribed by the soothsayers or other charlatans for the health and well-being of the Mogho Naba.

(e) Kamsaogho Naba, formerly accompanied the Tansoba to

[839] war. The Kamsaogho Naba is a eunuch, and for this reason he is commonly called Mogho Naba na poug'tiéma, "first wife of the Mogho Naba."

Other personages (not ministers). (a) Samandé Naba, in charge of all of the people in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba and a brother-in-arms of the Larrhallé Naba.

644 687 661 (b) Poé Naba, formerly the confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba. His duty, carried out by magical practices, was to denounce those wives or persons guilty of treason or of

644 554 576 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a customary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 782 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 788 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, [889] that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers.

644 788 431 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 788 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 304 681 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers, and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

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of the testicles, until the day when a eunuch managed, no one knows how, to take advantage of some of the women he was supposed to be guarding. From then on it was deemed necessary to remove the penis completely, and a copper cartridge was inserted for purposes of urination.

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As soon as the person fainted after undergoing the operation, a drink was concocted whose ingredients are unknown. When he revived, he was so thirsty that he downed the drink in a single gulp. It is said that the drug stupefied the eunuch to such a degree that he would be incapable of taking vengeance even if he had any weapons at hand.

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It was only after he had completely recovered that the victim was sent to the Mogho Naba. The latter assigned him the duty of guarding a harem or a royal tomb.

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him to his house, seats him by his side, and announces to the populace that he has just been visited by his son (Koubri Naba is a descendant of the Mogho Naba).

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He then offers the crown prince a cow and a great deal of [103] beer, and then, before he leaves, the Djiba Naba has free access to the chief's household where he takes as a wife the first nubile girl he encounters. The stay at Koubri traditionally lasted for seven days, but it could be shortened to two or three in view of the great expense involved in entertaining a prince of such high rank, especially at the present time when the canton chiefs no longer enjoy their former prestige.

The Djiba Naba continues on his way to Kombissiri where he is the guest of the canton chief. For a week, in addition to his food which must, of course, be copious and abundant quantities of beer, the crown prince also receives a cow, a sheep, and, before his departure for Doulougou, a wife.

[i.e. canton chief — Analyst]

576 the chest with the hands half-closed and the thumbs raised, strike the ground together three or four times. The Mossi then raises his body a little and rubs the palms of his hands together. He never looks the person he is saluting straight in the face, but keeps his eyes slightly lowered. It is a truly humbled posture, especially when the chief who is being saluted remains standing or on horseback, towering above his subordinate, and barely according him a glance. The women, instead of beating upon the ground with their forearms, strike it with the elbows and raise their open hands, fingers extended, to shoulder height. The grand salute, very rarely used, consists of turning around after the ordinary salute has been completed, seizing some dust with both hands, spreading it on the forehead, and saluting once more.

When two natives who know each other meet along the way, the younger of the two squats first and begins the salute, which the other acknowledges by squatting in turn. If they are carrying loads, they set them down before saluting. They are never in a hurry. Servants and women, when they walk before a chief, bow slightly and join their hands in front of the chest, palms together. Though complicated, the Mossi salute is rendered easily and gracefully by the natives; they are used to it from an early age, and never perform it in the clumsy and awkward manner which is theirs when they attempt to imitate the military salute, so fine and noble when well done and so ludicrous when distorted by a Black.

622 643 Chiefs are designated by the generic term naba, but a distinction is made between naba and dimma. The latter is elected /16/ according to very precise rules, which we shall mention later, and his authority stems directly from this election. There are only five dimma among the Mossi: the Moro Naba, and the nabas of Fada, Tenkodogo, Boussouma, and Yatenga. The naba, on the other hand, receives his power from another chief more powerful than himself who has chosen him from several candidates.

643 645 Mossi country lies wholly under the authority of the Moro Naba who is assisted by five high ministers: the Widi Naba, Laralé Naba, Gounga Naba, Kamisoro Naba and Ballum Naba. The respective functions of these ministers are somewhat ill-defined. The Kamisoro [illegible] is a eunuch and chief of the eunuchs. Upon his death, since he leaves no heirs, all his property devolves to the Moro Naba. It was thus to the latter's advantage to make him wealthy and to present him with the finest district in the country. The Widi Naba takes the place of the Moro Naba from the time of his death until the investiture

631 The canton chiefs consult the oldest men in the village where they reside, and the village chiefs make no decisions bearing on the community without assembling the elders and listening to their advice.

Everything is carried out through the channels of the hierarchy. A province chief never transmits an order directly to a village ruled by a canton chief, but he advises the latter who notifies the village chief, and the village chief in turn calls the elders together, conveys the orders to them, and through them informs all his subjects. The orders passed down in this formal way are always carried out, but if perchance a canton chief should wish to disobey his province chief, he would be seconded by his people who recognize his authority before any other.

643 645 701 The last Moro Nabas had become to some extent idle kings. The protocol to which they were subjected by custom constantly encumbered them, not unlike European court etiquette. The Moro Naba was surrounded with a veritable court. As mentioned above, his High Council was composed of five chief ministers. To these should be added the Iman who represents the Moslems and who wields a certain influence, and the Teng'Soba. /Tr. Among the Mossi there is both a Teng'Soba, earth priest, and a Tan'Soba, war minister. It would seem that the latter is meant here./ The duties of the latter are quite specialized. He does not live in the same village as the Moro Naba, and he rules a canton. In case of war, he is consulted on the timeliness of the hostilities and on their chances of success. It devolves upon him at this time to make the proper sacrifices and to question the ancestral spirits. When war has been decided on, he takes command of the armies, and everyone, the ministers and the canton chiefs, must obey him. The Moro Naba remains in Ouagadougou.

644 839 A crowd of subalterns gravitate around these high dignitaries. The eunuchs are not very respectable people; sometimes habitual thieves were made eunuchs, as were, in general, those pages guilty of too much familiarity with the naba's wives. Some of them could reach a high position. The Kamisoro were always eunuchs, and several important cantons were set aside for them.

644 The pages are young boys, hand-picked from the country's most gifted children. They must serve the naba, and they bear the name soroné. The naba is never alone; he always has one or several pages by his side. One holds the fan, one stands near the monarch to help him shift his position, another takes care of his shoes, yet another of his scepter; the great cup-bearer constantly holds a gourd filled with strong millet beer and covered by a tray of artistically woven basketry.

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[839] insofar as they involve an offense to justice. /88/ I do not speak of unnatural practices, which are almost unknown. When theft, murder, even insults, blows and wounds are punished, they are punished as injustices. Calumny is abhorred, and it is a very serious insult to say that someone has slandered someone else. A Mossi will not forgive an insult against his mother, because it is prejudicial to the family honor and hence to himself. In dealing with the natives, therefore, it is necessary to be careful and not to commit any injustices. They are very sensitive to this; while they accept a just punishment without complaint when the offense has been proved, they reject indignantly any accusation which cannot be proved, even when it is well founded.

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784 In addition to this general morality, many things are forbidden not because they are evil, but because they entail baleful consequences. The taboos (kisgou to the Mossi, from kisé, "to forbid") are almost innumerable. They may be divided into two classes: permanent kisgou, which affect the whole family, and personal and transitory kisgou.

784 The former usually consist of a prohibition to eat a certain animal or to do a certain thing. Thus some nabas are forbidden to meet, to see one another, and if they disregard this prohibition, one of them will die before the year is over. This prohibition is easily explained by the incessant wars which were formerly waged between important chiefs, and their fear of being poisoned or done away with in some other way by one of their enemies. Another instance: a Mossi goes to war on a frisky horse and he is forced to flee. His foes are about to seize him, and he owes his escape to the swiftness of his mount. When he returns home, he decrees that the horse will be a sacred animal to him and to his descendants, and that henceforth all his children and their children must treat horses well and may not eat their flesh under penalty of blindness or leprosy. This is the extent of the prohibition. The horse is not considered a guardian animal, no sacrifices are offered to it, and the Mossi do not call it tangandé (guardian animal of the village) or siga((soul-animal), but kisgou (prohibition).

784 Sometimes the kisgou affects only certain members of the family.
262 A father has been ill after eating dog flesh on two or three occasions. He consults the sorcerer, who states that dog flesh is forbidden to him and to his children, but not to other members of his family. A person

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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obligations to the Moro-naba, his lands were raided, his women seized and, if he were caught, he was killed.

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It is difficult to ascertain how the institution of provincial administrators arose among the Mossi. Some of the people still believe that the ministers were formerly slaves of the Moro-naba, but Delobsom claims that the first ministers were warrior companions of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty.[4] These men were not members of the royal lineage and thus were inferior in status to the members of the royal lineage and sublineages under their supervision. However, as emissaries of the Moro-naba, these ministers were entitled to respect by all the people. The ministers recommended successors to vacant district chieftainships; thus it was incumbent upon a district chief to be friendly with his minister if he wished succession to go to his eldest son.

The minister was the person who carried orders from the Moro-naba to the district chiefs, and he reported back to the Moro-naba on conditions in the district he visited. However, the minister could not interfere in the internal affairs of a district, nor could the district chief complain to the Moro-naba about a minister. Everyone was required to observe the strict hierarchy; the only sanction that the district chief exercised over his minister was to appeal to another minister in the hope that the Moro-naba would come to his aid.

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The districts that comprised the provinces of the ministers were scattered around the country and were not equal in size or importance. One minister, the Baloum-naba, controlled the districts ruled over by those chiefs who were the sons of recent rulers. Another, the Kamsoro-naba, a eunuch, had control of the largest and wealthiest districts, but he, in contrast to the other ministers, was not succeeded by sons and, when he died, the Moro-naba inherited all of his property. The ministers frequently became very wealthy because they received gifts whenever their charges went to Ouagadougou to pay homage to the ruler. The people from the districts under their control provided labor for their fields and for the upkeep of their houses. The ministers also received bribes from persons seeking vacant district chieftainships.

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When a district chief or Kombéré died, his heirs sent a horse or a sheep with leaves on its tail to notify the ruler of the death. The Moro-naba always questioned the envoys, and when he was satisfied that his man had not met with foul play, he sent the animal to his chief minister. The Moro-naba then sent his own envoys to the late chief's house with offerings for sacrifices to their common ancestors, and also instructed the envoys to collect the death offerings from the chief's relatives. After the funeral the eldest son of the dead chief and the other pretenders went to Ouagadougou bearing gifts to the district minister and the other important men surrounding the ruler. When the time came to name the new district chief, the Moro-naba called his ministers together and asked them: "Which one of the candidates is really capable of succeeding the late chief?"

M H 441 439 484 The journey takes six months from the time he leaves Ouagadougou to the time he returns. On his way to the Gold Coast he needs no bearers. He merely takes a Peuhl to herd the cattle, and provides him with food and 300 cowries a day, plus 1 franc on arrival per head of cattle herded.

Our trader stays with another Haoussa from Ouagadougou, another trader of course, who is wealthier than he. He does not pay rent, but offers him gifts from time to time in return for his hospitality.

His family lives at Iko in Haoussa territory, and consists of three wives and three children. He goes and sees them every two years.

M H 441 439 We can see that the Haoussa do their trading in grander and more forceful fashion than the Yarsé. They do not hesitate to expatriate themselves in order to carry out their trade, and in this fashion they have actually colonized southern Nigeria, Dahomey, Togoland, the Gold Coast, Mossi country, etc. Once settled there, they carry their trading operations farther than local merchants, and they hardly do anything else. While the Yarsé is an example of cultivator-trader, the Haoussa of Mossi territory is in most cases an example of pure trader who specializes completely in trading. This is why he towers above the whole trading structure of the country. Bent on gain, a speculator in cowries and French currency, more intelligent than the Mossi and Yarsé, he amasses large fortunes.

M 567 439 In order to be quite thorough on the subject of present and past trading in Mossi territory, it should be added that formerly the slave trade was carried out alongside that in livestock, cotton fabric, kola nut, and salt. The slaves came chiefly from Gourounsi, /541/, Boussansé, and Kipirsi lands. The Djermabé /Zerma?/, especially, sold slaves to the Mossi in very large numbers when they pillaged Gourounsi territory. This trade, like the others, was in the hands of the Yarsé and Haoussa.

M 839 439 304 Let us also add a word about the now-abolished eunuch trade. Formerly, the Mossi furnished some to the Haoussa, who forwarded them to Turkey via Egypt. The operated men were Gourounsi sold to the Mossi by the Zaberma and by their chief Baba-Tô. Some Mossi villages specialized in this kind of work. The village of Koubry,

especially, subsisted upon it. The victims, children from twelve to fifteen years old, were provided by the Moro Naba, who kept them afterward or sold them to the Haoussa.

In 1900 our ambassador to Turkey learned that a shipment of eunuchs which had reached Constantinople had originated in Mossi territory, which we had occupied since 1896. He warned the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who notified his colleague the Minister of the Colonies. Strict orders were issued to put an end to this Mossi industry, which has since ceased to exist.

Let us finally add the grain trade, which is unusual in Mossi territory. In the years 1906, 1907, and 1908 which saw poor harvests, however, the Mossi were forced to acquire grain in Yatenga (Ouahigouya circle) and in Gourounsi territory by selling livestock.

We have now concluded our discussion of Mossi occupations. Let us proceed to a study of the family and the superposed social organisms.

Chapter II

The Mossi: The Family, Public Powers, and Religion

We must state first that the Mossi family is a partly decommunalized family. This may come as a surprise in view of the foregoing section on work (cultivation predominates, stockbreeding is poor, industries flourish, trade is nonexistent), which had led us to expect something altogether different. Nevertheless, this is a fact.

The family is even highly decommunalized, although not everywhere to the same degree. In this respect, five different family types are to be found.

The first two are quite rare. They would seem to be witnesses to an ancient state of affairs which has now vanished. Thus, one finds the common patriarchal type among those blacksmiths who are gathered into /special/ quarters or even villages and whom we mentioned in the section on industries. This type is found only among them and not among isolated blacksmiths, where only the common Mossi family type occurs.

782 dolo and millet flour. There was no set time for this. The flesh
778 of the sacrificed animals devolved to the sacrificer, the head of Sékou.

At present day sacred groves are still to be found in various Mossi villages. Thus, for example, there are three at Kabayoro, two of which belong to individuals and one to the village. The Earth chief /Tr.: Tengsoba/ of Kabayoro offers sacrifices to the village grove whenever the bara says so.

The Mossi also make sacrifices to the hills.

At Sabtinga, about 17 kilometers northwest of Ouagadougou, there is a rise in the ground called Tantiibo where the Moro Naba used to go once a year with the Baloum Naba, many chiefs and people at the time when the weather begins to grow cold. He ordered a beef, a chicken, millet flour, and a gourd of dolo to be taken along, and they were handed over to the head of the quarter where the hillock stood. This chief performed the sacrifice and begged the piece of ground to grant good health to the Moro Naba. Only
● [839] the Moro Naba, the Balou, the sacred people (eunuchs), and the soroné were present at the sacrifice, Other people who had come to Sabtinga remained in the village, whence the Moro Naba set out on foot to the spot of the sacrifice.

At Kombé-Padanda, a small hillock located in a /589/ Ouagadougou quarter, the same sacrifice was offered in the same fashion and at the same time of year.

326 Let us add that when Mossi blacksmiths go and smelt iron ore
782 in the bush, they kill chickens and offer millet flour on the spot where they extract the ore. The sacrifice is offered to the spirits of the hill, as well as to the Earth and to Naba Ouondé.

778 Sacrifices are made to watercourses as well as to hills, either
782 at fishing time or whenever the bara indicate that a certain stream requires a certain sacrifice.

825 As far as crocodiles are concerned, some of them are held
262 sacred by the Mossi. As for snakes, they are killed and usually eaten, but not everyone eats them. Some people abstain.

778 As for the Earth, the Moro Naba had sheep, chickens, millet
782 flour, and dolo handed over to the Baloum Naba through eunuchs several times a year, whenever a bara told him to do so. The Baloum Naba handed these gifts in person to the chief of Ouagadougou,

793 never offers sacrifices himself to the Earth at Ouagadougou, nor does
174 he have them offered by the Gandé Naba, his minister of religion. He entrusts with this task the Ouagadougou Naba, who is a grandson of the autochtonous inhabitants and thus favorably regarded by the local divinities. Similarly, when the Moro Naba sacrifices to the hillocks surrounding Ouagadougou, he entrusts the local chief with the offerings and the physical sacrifice. Now, what the Moro Naba still does at Ouagadougou was no doubt done by other Mossi chiefs throughout the land after conquest, once the submission of the autochtonous inhabitants had been ensured by force of arms. Hence, the institution of the Tensoba.

One might object that Earth chiefs are also to be found in Gourounsi territory, although the Gourounsi are independent. We know, however, that the present-day Gourounsi cantons were not the achievement of the Gourounsi themselves but of minor Mossi dynasties established in the territory. Under the circumstances, the same substitution of conquering chiefs for conquered chiefs has occurred there as in Mossi territory, with the same consequences.

793 "The Tensoba," says Marc, p. 157, "whose title means 'Master of the Earth,' stands in opposition to the naba who is a military chief....

"The Tensoba is the indispensable mediator between the ancestors and their living descendants. It is he who conducts the funeral ceremonies and who decides on the honors to be rendered on the Day of the Dead. It is to him that one appeals in case of an epidemic or any public misfortune, since misfortunes are always due to the evil inclinations of ancestors that must be allayed."

793 /596/ Actually, the institution of the Earth chief does not strip
643 the village and canton chiefs of all religious powers. In some areas,
839 as Marc pointed out, the Earth chiefs have gradually vanished, and
718 the political chiefs have become religious chiefs as well. They per-
[43] form sacrifices on the bara's advice, without failing to make a gift of some sort (100 or 1,000 cowries) to the latter also. By the same token and up to a point, the Moro Naba is invested with a religious character and with religious attributes. It is he, as we have already seen, who orders the performance of sacrifices to the Earth, to the hills. Every year during the dry season, he has a donkey sacrificed to Naba Koutou, a former Moro Naba, in the hut where the latter is buried. Prior to our occupation it was a eunuch who performed

the sacrifice and killed the donkey. He also slit the throat of a horse, a beef, and a sheep. (This eunuch in charge of guarding the tomb was called by the name of Naba Koutou, and in a way perpetuated the deceased Moro Naba. He was granted special privileges. If a man who was condemned to death ran away and reached the tomb, he was safe but became the eunuch's slave. Similarly, a captive who ran away from his master gained his freedom from the latter if he reached the grave, but became the slave of Naba Koutou. Finally, at that time, it was forbidden to ride by the hut on a donkey. Naba Koutou would seize the donkey, or at least demand a ransom in cowries before returning it. This applied to any animals who ran astray near the tomb. The tomb still exists nowadays, along with the Naba Koutou who watches over it, but the latter no longer enjoys the same privileges.)

We saw earlier that the Moro Naba had a sort of minister of the cult in the person of the Gandé Naba, high priest and sacrificer. There was also the Pouy Naba, or chief of the fetisheers, whose function was probably to mediate between the Mossi bara and timisoba as a whole and the central authorities.

Let us close this study of Mossi religion, which incidentally is quite incomplete and a mere outline, with a few words on the human sacrifices that were performed /597/ in the territory prior to our occupation, and a few words on circumcision as well.

"Human sacrifices," says Marc., p. 156, "definitely took place among the Mossi up to the time when we occupied the territory. Whenever a Moro Naba died at Ouagadougou, one of his wives and one of his horses were sent to Gambaga in order to be sacrificed on the tomb of Ouidiraogo (?) who is regarded as the mother of the first Moro Naba. Soon after the occupation of Ouagadougou by the French, the dethroned Moro Naba, Boukary Koutou, ordered the sacrifice of a black rooster, a black goat, a black donkey, a black beef, and a black slave on one of the mountains overlooking the White Volta. This, it seems, was bound to cause the immediate death of the new Moro Naba enthroned by Voulet."

As for circumcision, the Mossi circumcise boys and excise girls. Boys are circumcised when they are from eight to twelve years old, and thirty or forty of them are circumcised at one time. The

582 I. Differences of tribe or caste. The Mossi may not contract
326 marriage with blacksmiths. This is absolutely forbidden. However,
564 they may marry among the Foulsé, Samo, Peul, Yarsé, etc."

This calls for several remarks. The blacksmiths of Yatenga are Foulsé and not Mossi. However, it is not a tribal difference which dictates the prohibition under discussion, since the Mossi can marry among the Foulsé as a whole. It is rather a difference in caste. It must be noted, as we said above /not translated/, that the common Foulsé cannot marry blacksmiths either.

[171] Here, as in all of the /French/ Sudan, blacksmiths are both feared and scorned. Basically, they are regarded as fearful sorcerers.

582 II. Kinship. There must be a lapse of 200 years between the time of the betrothed couple and the time when their common ancestor lived. This is likewise an absolute impediment.

III. If a Mossi has relations with a young girl or woman belonging to his fiancée's soukala during the period of his engagement, the marriage cannot take place.

This impediment, however, is not absolute. If the guilty man begs for the forgiveness of the family head and the latter accords it, the union may be effected later."

582 IV. Unnatural practices. The marriage cannot take place: (1) if
●839 the betrothed man has been caught in the act of sexual intercourse with a she-ass (a phenomenon none too rare in Yatenga); and (2) if the betrothed girl has relations with a native who had sexual intercourse with a she-ass. These impediments are absolute.

This is why the inhabitants of a Yatenga village (Dénia) who are reputed to have had relations with asses in former times may not marry outside their locality.

582 V. Infirmities. If the fiancé is blind, the marriage may not take
[132] place unless the girl consents to it. No one can constrain her to do so.

VI. Leprosy. The same applies when the fiancé has leprosy.

VII. Impuberty of the betrothed pair. The marriage cannot take place unless both parties are nubile. This is an absolute impediment, but in practice the problem rarely arises.

VIII. Insanity of one of the betrothed."

582 Question of virginity. The girl's virginity is not very important
830 here and, it must be pointed out, far less so than among the Bambara. This is, incidentally, connected with the fact that the marriage bond is less sound and the separation of the spouses easier to obtain. A combination of related facts makes the institution of marriage and

586 principal theoretical cases which may arise concerning divorce. I borrow them from Vadier.

"Divorce occurs in the following cases.

1. By mutual consent. Spouses may separate if they do not get along. This is very unusual, however, and occurs only after the family heads of both spouses intervene amicably. The /247/ wife keeps whatever gifts her husband may have offered her if it was he who first requested a divorce. On the other hand, she leaves them behind if it was she who asked to leave.

2. Insults. Insults addressed to the husband by the wife, or vice versa, are not grounds for divorce. If the husband insults his wife's relatives, divorce does follow. The wife keeps the gifts.

3. Maltreatment. It is acknowledged that the husband may beat his wife in order to discipline her. If the injuries are serious, however, or if the husband continually beats his wife, she becomes free, but the gifts, sheep, goats, bracelets, etc., which she received from her husband remain in his possession.

4. Nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty. (1) On the husband's part. If the husband does not cohabit with his wife, she cannot say anything, but she is free to have lovers outside of her husband's soukala. If the latter complains, the wife leaves him.

[164] If the husband is infected with a venereal disease, a period of three years is granted him for a cure. If he does not get well after this lapse of time, the wife becomes free.

Verification by the naba takes place, as in the preceding case, if the husband is impotent, and likewise the wife returns to her family. The wife retains the gifts in all three cases.

(2) On the wife's part. If the wife refuses to fulfill her conjugal duty, the husband can turn her out and keep the gifts which he gave to her.

If the wife has a venereal disease, the husband cannot take her back.

5. Infidelity. The husband's infidelity is not grounds for divorce. The infidelity of the wife, however, is sufficient reason to terminate the marriage. The gifts remain with the husband.

6. Lack of support. If the husband refuses to provide food and support for his wife, she may request a divorce, but she must leave to her husband the gifts she received from him.

● [839] 7. Guilty relations of one of the spouses with animals or with a person accused of having had intercourse with a she-ass.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

Naba Baongo (ca. 1800–30) decided that it was more profitable to sell them.[16] Subsequent rulers, especially the two Mogho Nanamse who ruled just prior to the French conquest, sold most of their captives to passing caravans or in special sections of the larger markets. When other persons sold slaves in the market, the Raga Naba collected some 1,000 cowries on each transaction—the largest tax on any market commodity.

The Mossi rulers seem to have benefited even more from the sale of eunuchs, for they had a monopoly over them. The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou sent some captured slaves and all recidivous thieves to Teemetenga village in Koubri district, some 13 miles south of the capital, to be operated upon.[17] So successful were the Mossi surgeons that—in contrast to specialists in other areas, who lost nine lives for every successful castration—the mortality among the Mossi was only one out of ten.[18] Some of the eunuchs furnished by the Mossi were sold as far away as Constantinople, a fact which surprised the French ambassador to Turkey who saw them there in 1900.[19]

In addition to slaves and eunuchs, the Mogho Naba kept a large number of bondsmen to provide services for him. One group, the Dapore, lived in a ward of the capital called Dapoya, and had a chief, the Dapore Naba, who was himself a Dapore. The origin of these people is obscure, but they seem to have been the children of foreign captives who were brought to Ouagadougou and placed in the ruler's service. Some of them even claimed that their ancestors had come to Ouagadougou voluntarily and had placed themselves under the care and protection of the ruler. This seems unlikely, however, since the status of these people resembles that of persons captured by Sudanese rulers and installed in special wards as serfs.[20] Some of the Dapore lived in villages of their own and cultivated fields for the Mogho Naba. Others lived in a ward of Ouagadougou, served in the palace household, and provided the royal executioners. Some were selected to serve as palace eunuchs, and placed under the charge of the Kamsoghlo Naba. The Dapore were hardly ever sold unless they were convicted criminals. The Mogho Naba and his chiefs refrained from selling serfs or captives who had been born in Mossi country. However, they often claimed the sons and daughters of these people as pages or pughsiudse.

The Baglere made up the second group of bondsmen providing services for the Mogho Naba. They, too, lived in a special ward and were headed by the Baglere Naba, one of their own people. Their origin is also obscure: some of them claimed to be descended from Fulani slaves who had run away from their masters and sought asylum in Mossi country; others believed that they were the descendants of foreign captives. The Baglere

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

traded for such articles as needles, mirrors, beads, coral and amber, tea, coffee, fezes, tailored robes, and most important of all, salt (Dubois 1899 : 292–304). Presumably, by the time Dubois reported on this trade, the Mossi had stopped trading slaves and eunuchs into this region, because we know from other sources that these people were sold through Timbuktu as far north as Algeria and Constantinople.[8]

The caravans which brought desert and northern goods into Mossi country collected grain, cotton cloth, livestock and slaves to be sold in the forest areas. Captain Lonsdale, an Englishman who visited Salaga in 1881 and gave a good description of its markets and traders, includes among the latter

> ... the Mossi with his cattle, sheep and slaves—these latter, generally Gurunsi, are not exposed for sale in the street or market, but can be seen where the owner resides. (Lonsdale 1882)

The extent to which the Mossi people themselves participated in all aspects of the caravan trade which crossed their country is far from clear. Barth, Lonsdale and Dubois all report that the Mossi were members of the caravans both in the forest zone and in Timbuktu, and my own informants agree with these reports. In contrast, however, both Marc and Tauxier believe that the Mossi were seldom the actual caravaneers. Marc declares that the Yarse

> ... are the most numerous group devoting itself to commerce in the region which we occupy. This is equally true of the Hausa, but probably only over the last years. Moors come sometimes from Dori as far as Wagadougou. One seldom meets Mande-Dioulas. As for the pure Mossi, it was only a short while ago that they themselves began to follow the caravans. (Marc 1909 : 170–71)

Similarly, Tauxier states that

> ... it is not the Mossi who do this [caravan] trading but the Yarse we know so well, and the Wangara settled in Mossi territory. Mossi trade, therefore, is not really Mossi, or at least it was not in the past. If it has now begun to be to some extent, it is thanks to the French settlement in the territory. (Tauxier 1912 : 538)

In the face of the early reports by Barth and others, how does one resolve the contradiction apparent in Tauxier's comments? These early travelers might have mistaken the Yarse for Mossi since these

(8) Marc, 1909 : 170–171. "We met in Mossi country two natives who, when children, had been seized [as slaves] and led through Timbuktu as far as Algeria ... The commerce in slaves was doubled among the Mossi by commerce in eunuchs. Mossi country was one of those rare countries where people knew how to make them, and the Moro Nlabas exported with great profit as far as Constantinople those whom they had had mutilated."